133 offshore. The interior country in the north is hilly, with an average elevation of about 500 feet, but toward the southwest it becomes progressively flatter and more desolate. The portion from Abu Dhabi to Khor al Odaid is barren and virtually uninhabited.

132 The climate is particularly trying in the summer months from May to October, when temperatures of 115° F. and humidity readings of 90 to 98 per cent are frequently recorded. In contrast, the days from November to February are agreeably cool, while the nights often are cold. The rainfall is irregular, and normally approximates 4 to 5 inches a year. It is usually concentrated in sudden and violent storms during the mid-winter months.

POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

141 162 The population of Trucial Oman is not accurately known, but in 1951 it was estimated at about 80,000, including Bedouin 144 tribes totaling possibly 8,000. The settled inhabitants are of mixed racial stock. They are predominantly Arabs, but Negro admixtures, descendants of former slaves from Africa, and communities of Baluchis, Iranians and Indians are prominent. Except for 195 a few Hindus, the majority are Moslems. Most of the Arabs belong to the Wahhabi branch of the Sunni sect of Islam.

468 228 The chief occupations of the people are pearl diving, fishing, shipbuilding and date cultivation. Some of the best pearling reefs in the Persian Gulf are found off the Trucial Coast, and Dibai long has been recognized as the center of activity in the southern Gulf region. The industry has declined within recent years, but, in more favorable times, thousands of pearling vessels are said to have put out from Trucial Oman ports each season from early summer to November.

241 Agriculture is of secondary importance, being confined to areas in which water is available for irrigation. Date groves exist along the coast as far west as Abu Dhabi, and small amounts of millet, wheat, tobacco

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
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133 The coast on the Gulf of Oman is bolder, the hills sometimes coming down to the water's edge, and the hilly tract inland, perhaps 20 miles in breadth, is the highest part of the whole territory. The interior of Trucial Oman, approached from the Persian Gulf, consists of a low and sandy maritime plain (*taff*) almost entirely unsuited for tillage, though not without natural vegetation and even wood, and provided with enough wells and water-holes to support a scanty Bedouin population. Beyond the *taff* are inland plains containing tracts with occasional cultivation, of which *Jiri*, *Dheid*, and *Liwah* are the best known.

Climate

132 Between November and April the heat is bearable and the nights are cool. From May to September the climate is excessively hot. The rainfall, which is confined to the winter months, is believed to be about 5 in., and would therefore approximate to that of Bahrein (see p. 312).

Population

162 619 The ethnology of the tribes inhabiting Trucial Oman is often intricate and perplexing. The tribes which are numerically the most important are the following:

Beni Yās, in the Abu Dhabi Principality (10,000 settled, 2,000 nomadic); Sharqiyīn, in the *Shameiliyah* tract and *Ras el-Kheimah* district in the Oman promontory (7,000 settled); Āl 'Ali, chiefly at *Umm el-Qaiwein* (6,750 settled); Āl Bu Maheir, in all coast towns (5,500); Sūdān, in coast towns and *Bu Mūsa* Island (5,000); Na'īm, in Central Oman promontory (3,500 settled and 1,200 nomad); Za'āb, in *Jezirat el-Hamra* and *Khōr Kalba* in the Shārjah Principality (3,500); Ahl Ras el-Kheimah, in the town and district of that name (2,000); Shihūh (2,500) and Taneij (2,500 settled and 1,500 nomad), in the same places; Beni Qitab (2,000 nomad), in Shārjah territory; Shweihiyīn (2,000), in *Dibai* and *Shārjah*. Several of these tribes are also represented in the Sultanate of Oman, in El-Qatar, and in Bahrein. In addition may be mentioned 1,500 *Hūwalah* in *Shārjah* town; 1,400 Baluchis at *Dibai*; about 2,500 Persians in *Abu Dhabi* and *Dibai* towns, *Khōr Fakkān* and *Ghāllah*; some hundreds of Hindus in the coast towns, and numerous negro slaves.

162 665 795 The total population has been estimated at over 80,000 only 8,000 being nomadic. The people are divided between the Hināwi

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
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and Ghāfiri political factions (see Chap. VIII, p. 240), the former being Sunnis of the Maliki sect, the latter virtually Wahabis, though not of the militant order. Modern rifles are widely distributed both in town and country, but the traffic in arms has now been virtually suspended (cf. p. 247).

Industries and Trade

The most important industry is pearl-diving, which in summer employs most of the able-bodied men with more than 1,200 boats; though during the winter some of the divers take part in the ordinary fisheries (the second great industry of the coast), the majority take their ease, retained by the pearl-boat owners and contractors, by whom they are supported through the slack season. Agriculture employs the settled population of the interior; vegetables are raised by irrigation from wells in most places, and dates are also grown, though they seldom fully ripen S. of Ras el-Kheimah. Cereals only succeed in a few favoured spots such as *Sīr* in the Shameilīyah district. The live stock of the villages consists of camels, donkeys, cattle, sheep, and goats; horses are rare. The Bedouins subsist chiefly by their herds. In winter, when there is pasture, they roam far and wide; in the hot weather they gather about the more abundant wells, such as those of the *Jiri* plain in the N., and *Beinūnah* in the W.

Pearls are the most valuable export, and are sent almost entirely to India from the port of Dibai. The oyster-shells from which the pearls are taken come next in importance; it is questioned whether the practice of selling these, instead of at once returning them to the sea, may not in the long run tend to exhaust the pearl-banks. Dried fish are exported from Abu Dhabi.

The imports in order of their value are: grain and pulse, from India and Persia; cotton piece-goods from India; dates and date-juice from 'Irāq; coffee, chiefly from India; sugar, from or through India, and miscellaneous provisions from Persia. The only steamship port is Dibai, but the other coastal towns are used by native sea-going boats running to and from India, Persia, and 'Irāq. Inland trade with the Bedouins is of no great volume, but Trucial Oman shares that of the Bireimi oasis with the Sultanate. The coast between Ras Musandam and Abu Dhabi was formerly used as a base by smugglers of arms, bringing rifles and ammunition from Sohār through Bireimi, and loading for Persia and El-Qatar either at the coastal towns, or at lonely spots between them. Within recent years it was necessary to warn the Sheikhs of 'Ajmān, Shārjah,

DESERT WARFARE

I have mentioned that tribal wars were largely due to a lack of unity amongst the sheikhs, but there was one interesting and significant period in the history of Oman when the rulers of south-east Arabia were unified as a political force. This occurred towards the end of the last century and the beginning of the twentieth, when the Wahabi sect (so potent an influence in present-day Arab politics), wielded great power in Arabia and were constantly at war with Great Britain, causing us considerable irritation in the early days of our trade along the Persian Gulf.

The Wahabis were a fanatical religious sect of Mohammedans, a branch of the Sunnis. They claim descent from Ali-bin-Abi Talib, the cousin and adopted son of the Prophet Mohammed, whose daughter Fatimah he had married. The failure of Ali to succeed his father-in-law was the cause of serious dissensions in the Mohammedan world, leading to interminable wars and schisms which split the Arabs into innumerable sects, of which the Wahabis are one. These schisms have continued to the present day, and are the main reason why, in spite of the Arab League, and the efforts of King Farouk of Egypt and King Ibn Saud to unite Islam, the Arab world will never coalesce as it did in the days of Mohammed.

The Wahabis, who will be remembered in recent times for the disaffection they fomented in Egypt, have always been schemers and political rebels. They are fanatical in the extreme, and are the most puritanical of all Arab sects, having little of the tolerance of the modern Arab. Their chief asset at one time was their religious and bloodthirsty intolerance, and being well-organized and trained fighters, they conquered a large part of southern and south-eastern Arabia. They held the Oman tribes in subjection and practically forced them into piracy and banditry, the purpose of this being to harass the British and cause as much political confusion as possible in the Persian Gulf. Paradoxically, it was this invasion of Wahabi influence which forced the Oman sheikhs, for the first time in history, to become united. Tribal wars ceased, because they were against the interests of the Wahabi leaders, and the sheikhs degenerated into little more than petty sub-chiefs and pirates.

At the beginning of the century, the power of the Wahabis in Arabia was finally broken. Piracy had been stamped out by the British naval authorities for many years, and by the Treaty of 1892 the Trucial Sheikhs ratified the earlier Treaty of 1853, which provided for the entire cessation of liabilities at sea amongst the signatories, and imposed on the British Government the duty of enforcing

2: O'Shea G-3 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

795 peace, and obtaining reparation for maritime aggression committed in contravention of the agreement. Thus for a time order was restored in the Oman territories and the sheikhs were at liberty to wage war and undertake predatory raids, on condition that they did not permit any foreign power to intervene or acquire any interests, commercial or political, in the peninsula.

648 Towards the end of the first decade, however, another powerful influence began to make itself felt; the Ottoman Empire had already established its tentacles in Arabia, and in 1914, when British resources were strained to their utmost in various theatres of war, the Turks did their best to stir up strife in Oman. It was not until late in 1917 that Turkish forces withdrew from the Gulf, an event which coincided with Colonel Lawrence's victorious advance in north-west Arabia, culminating in the utter defeat of the Turkish army.

000 Although the name of Lawrence was legendary throughout Arabia at the end of the last war, it is remarkable that, in the south, at any rate, very few Arabs appear to have heard of him. Although I mentioned his name to scores of educated Arabs, the only ones who remembered his name and epic feats were the Khan Bahadur Abdur-bin-Razzak, the Sheikh of Sharjah, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Ali, ruler of the Beni Qitab. Even then there was no reverence or admiration in their recollection, but rather a tendency to regard his exploits as the amusing adventures of an eccentric foreigner. I believe this fact is mentioned by Douglas Glen in his book *In the Footsteps of Lawrence*, and it is a curious commentary on the Arab character.

648 721 During the 1939–45 war, especially when the British and Dominion armies were fighting for their lives at El Alamein and Tobruk, the enemy made several attempts to foment strife in Oman and despatched spies, by way of Persia and Iraq, to incite turbulent elements amongst the tribes. Their efforts were always unsuccessful, thanks to the firm loyalty of the sheikhs, and the brilliant counter-espionage organization set up by the Khan Bahadur Abdur bin Razzak. His agents were scattered in towns and sea-ports throughout Oman and other parts of southern Arabia, and any stranger who landed on the coast was quickly trailed and his movements reported to headquarters at Sharjah. There was also an abortive movement to stir up a religious war, with the ultimate aim of freeing Arabia from the yoke of the foreigner, but this had very little success and was soon nipped in the bud. Italian or German airmen who flew over Arabia were nearly always forced

My name (which gives difficulty even to some English people) was also the cause of some temporary embarrassment amongst the Omani tribes, since when incorrectly pronounced it resembled the name of the Sh'ia or Sh'ea tribe, a sect of Sunnis who are very much disliked by orthodox Mohammedans. The Sh'ias are one of the sects who believe that Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet, should have succeeded the Prophet as Caliph. A similar experience befell my cousin, General Sir John Shea, when he was with Allenby in Palestine, only on this occasion the Arabs accorded him respect, on account of his name, rather than hostility. They would not believe that he was not a descendant of Alquum-Sh'ea, an Arab prophet of the sixteenth century, greatly revered by the tribes of the North African littoral. In actual fact the name is derived from the Gælic, Seaghdha, meaning 'stately or sagacious'.

Two incidents occurred at this time which dampened the good spirits of the camp. A sergeant attached to the R.A.F. Staging Post was drowned whilst bathing, and an Indian of the Pioneer contingent ran amok and killed a number of people before he committed suicide. The sergeant, who was due to be repatriated to England the day following the tragedy, was sunbathing on the beach, when he heard the cries of a swimmer who was out of his depth. He dashed into the sea and managed to hold the drowning man's head above the water, but before he could reach the shore a large wave caught him and swept him out to sea. Ironically, the man he had set out to rescue was saved, whilst the sergeant lost his life.

The Levies provided a guard of honour at the funeral, which was attended by representatives of all the units of the camp, and the coffin was laid to rest under a little white cross on Cemetery Hill. Thousands of Englishmen were dying on the battlefronts of France and Burma, and the death of one man was, perhaps, an insignificant event, but in a small community of Europeans such as ours at Sharjah, it was an occasion for sombre reflection. Although I loved Arabia, I had no wish to leave my bones in the desert, and the sight of the grave of that young Englishman, snatched away in the prime of life, filled one with sadness.

The other affair was much more dramatic. An Indian soldier-artisan, who had been refused leave to visit his wife in India, suddenly began to get 'queer'. Instead of being placed under protective arrest he was left alone and shunned by his fellow-Indians. One night he rushed screaming out of his tent while the camp was asleep; two sentries who attempted to stop him were shot, one through